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ABSTRACT

Intended to help communities raise funds for Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) projects, this booklet lists ideas and examples, many volunteered and tested by RIF projects themselves. The first of the booklet's four sections offers suggestions for preparing for a fundraising effort. The next two sections contain ideas on the main avenues of fundraising--special events and direct appeal, while the last section profiles fundraising campaigns of six diverse RIF projects. (HTH)

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THE RIF BOOK OF IDEAS

RAISING FUNDS

Reading Is Fundamental, Inc.

CS 008 076

TABLE OF

C O N T E N T S

There's more than one way to raise money. On bright fall weekends hundreds of people drive through a small town in Arkansas en route to big football games in Little Rock. One weekend as traffic backed up in the middle of town the waiting motorists were asked to contribute to the local RIF project.

In another small town, a minister donated to the RIF project the payments he received for performing funerals for people who didn't belong to his congregation.

That's what this section of *The RIF Book of Ideas* is about—ingenious ways to find the money your RIF project needs to keep putting books into the hands of children.

The *Book of Ideas* is just that, a list of ideas and examples, many volunteered and tested by RIF projects themselves. For more background information on how to manage a fund-raising campaign, please see *Welcome (Back) to RIF,* included in your Approval Kit.

This booklet has four sections. The introduction suggests how you might prepare for your fundraising effort. The next two offer ideas on the main avenues of fundraising, special events and direct appeal. And the last section profiles the fundraising campaigns of six diverse RIF projects.

1 Getting Ready

There are six preliminary things you can do that will greatly increase your odds of running an effective fundraising campaign.

1. Consult an attorney about obtaining tax status that will permit contributions to your project to be tax-deductible. Please note that for legal reasons the tax status of Reading Is Fundamental, Inc. does not apply to local projects. Also consult an attorney about any charitable solicitation laws that may apply to your fundraising activities.

2. Prepare a budget of your anticipated expenses for the upcoming year. Include:

- Books—the cost, taking into account RIF discounts and any shipping charges, of the books you will give to children this year.
- Printing and Copying—everything from letters to parents and newspaper announcements to copied material you send to RIF.
- Postage—for book orders, letters and reports to RIF, solicitation letters, etc.
- Supplies—paper, rubber cement, typewriter ribbons, etc.
- Transportation—if you'll have to move your books or need to cover your volunteers' travel costs.

3. Set up an airtight system for keeping records of whom you solicit, when and how, and how much each contributor gives. Set up tickler files to remind yourself to resolicit donors one year after their initial donations.

4. Consider your timing carefully. December is a good time to ask for money, since everyone is rushing to make the last tax-deductible donations of the year. Tax-month, of course, is a rotten time to ask, as is August, when many people go off on vacation. Watch for appropriate times of day, too: don't call a restaurant owner at high noon.

5. Produce some sharply written, nicely packaged literature about your program. It needn't be fancy. We've seen RIF project brochures printed in just one color ink, with no photographs, that were clean and direct and effective. If you don't want to spend money on professional offset printing, type and copy a fact sheet about your project. Also gather copies of any publicity you've received and good photographs. See *Welcome (Back) to RIF* for more suggestions on literature.

6. Build on a base of good public education. The better known your project is to the community, the easier it will be to raise funds. See *Welcome (Back) to RIF* for an outline of how to manage a successful publicity campaign.

2 Special Events Some Good Ideas

The "special event" is a handy category into which we toss any kind of fundraising more elaborate than one person asking another for a contribution. Special events can be sales of services or products, or they might be occasions when you solicit a lot of people in a dramatic way—a televised telethon, for instance. In either case, the special event focuses the public's attention on your project, and the publicity surrounding a successful event can give your future fundraising a terrific boost.

Special events can be one-time affairs or, if well-received, they can become annual events. Timing is important, of course. It's wise to steer away from the crowded days around the major holidays.

Beware the glamorous gala—the ball, the benefit dinner-dance, the opera and reception. While a gala may bring in a good amount of money, it also costs a lot to stage. The underwritten gala, in which a group of businesses, organizations and individuals pay for all your costs, is the very best sort, for all proceeds from ticket sales can then go straight to your project. Before setting ticket prices, calculate all conceivable costs. Then sell your tickets aggressively. Have an illustrious board of benefactors whose names appear on your invitations, and who sell tickets to their friends and associates. Also have a program for the event in which you sell advertising space to businesses and organizations.

The following ideas are largely tested and recommended by RIF projects, making them quite literally "tried and true."

Sports and Other Fun

Sports Tournaments
Be it volleyball, softball, basketball, tennis, polo or football (flag is highly recommended over tackle), the sports tournament is a time-honored American way of raising money and having fun. Invite organizations such as Scouts, Kiwanis and sororities to enter. Call the school athletic coaches and the sports pros at area clubs. Each team or contestant pays an entry fee, which goes to your project along with proceeds from concession stands. You can also raffle off cakes, books or prizes during breaks. Youngsters help out by working the concessions and being referees and scorekeepers.

Golfer's Day
You might sponsor a glorious day of golf, with ticket prices covering greens fees, snacks and dinner. For the price of a separate ticket, non-golfers could join the others for dinner. Perhaps the golf course would give your project free use of the course for the day, reducing the proportion of your proceeds that would be diverted to cover costs.

A-Thons
You could sponsor a runner in a marathon race. Collect donations door-to-door; givers contribute to the RIF project at the rate of $1 per mile. (So $5 makes someone a 5-mile sponsor, for instance.) Acknowledge contributors by posting a sign at the finish line listing all 1-mile sponsors, 2-mile sponsors, etc.

There are also lap-a-thons, in which contributors pledge to donate a set amount for each lap a youngster (how about the captain of the track team) runs around a track. Also consider walk-a-thons, bike-a-thons and horse-a-thons. How about a rock-n-roll marathon, with prizes for the musicians and ticket sales at area high schools.

In one RIF project, a hairstylist ran a 24-hour cut-a-thon at a local college. A department store served as the event's "angel," lending chairs and equipment and advertising the cut-a-thon on their snack bar placemats and in window displays.

Cruising Down the Seine
The Potomac or the Mississippi. You might sponsor a boat cruise. Many commercial companies operate cruise boats, or perhaps, by working through the local yachting clubs you could find someone willing to donate a boat for the evening. Serve a light supper and, if the boat is large enough, have music and dancing.

Crazy Olympics
In this comedic-style sports tournament, you invite people to compete in peanut-rolling contests, tricycle races, hoop-races, etc. Jaycees, the mayor, the board of trade, Rotarians, the AAUW, the superintendent of schools—challenge them all to join you. Again, entry fees and concession stand proceeds are donated to the RIF project.

Bingo Bash
You could borrow—what else?—a church basement for a RIF Bingo party, where players' entry fees are contributed to your project. Give books as prizes.

Horse Show
One project in Texas sponsored a large horse show that netted $8,500. Contestants pay entry fees and the audience buys tickets. Try to persuade a group of local businesses to contribute a horse, which you raffle off at day's end to some lucky ticket-holder.

Up and Away
Other projects have sold tickets for plane rides. Perhaps a local pilot would donate services for the day, so all ride-fees could go to your project.

Unhappy Princes Jump for RIF
Frog-jumping contests have become honorable traditions in some parts of the country. For a RIF fundraiser, you might invite Scout troops, biology classes, the good ole boy and girl in us all to enter prize hoppers in a jump trial. Entry fees go to the RIF project.

Touring
RIF projects have held house tours, garden tours, haunted house tours, neighborhood tours and town tours. How about a nature-tour, walking along the banks of a local river with a biology teacher, or climbing a fire tower with a park ranger?

Learning While Earning for RIF
Professionals might donate their time or charge you a reduced rate to teach classes for which your RIF project charges tuition fees: cooking classes (how to make an airy mousse), woodworking (bookshelves in a day), pottery (the elementary pinch-pot). High school and college instructors may be willing to teach.

Movies
RIF projects have charged admission to screenings of old movies (a Hitchcock festival, perhaps), well-loved children's movies, and silent films. How about working with a theatre owner to hold a RIF benefit premiere of a film recently released to rave reviews? You might have an elegant reception in the lobby during intermission.

Shows, Performances, Speakers
There are antique shows; luncheons and fashion shows featuring designs from a department store, hand-sewn clothing or period clothes; craft shows where high school students sell objects created in art and shop classes. Also consider a benefit play or musical. Speakers, if they are topical and lively, can draw large crowds; one RIF project sponsored a talk by a nationally known pediatrician that drew 850 people.

Wining, Dining, Dancing
Oh, the numberless ways to eat for RIF. Projects have held dinner-dances and wine-tasting parties (where merchants donated wine and cheese). One group sponsored a wild game dinner, complete with venison, for which an inn donated its facilities and staff services. (This became an annual event, so successful was it.) Then there was the Pancake dinner thrown for a RIF project by a local Kiwanis club.

Also consider a luncheon or breakfast for local business leaders. It might be sponsored by a group of companies that already support your RIF project. You could show the RIF film, introduce some youngsters from your project, and end by having one of your business hosts encourage the guests to contribute to your RIF project.

Festivals and Fairs
Another grand American tradition. You might set up a booth at the county or state fair and accept contributions, recruit volunteers and offer information. There's the art exhibit, where artists sell their works and the RIF project receives entry fees and a small commission on each sale. Charge admission to a strawberry festival, an asparagus fete or a mid-summer corn and tomatoes feast. Perhaps a school carnival would be fun, with rides, games, plants, food and bake sales, etc.

Collecting, Selling, Marketing for RIF

The Traditionals
You know these. RIF projects sell candy, magazine subscriptions, Christmas trees, Christmas and Hannukah cards (design a card using a RIF child's drawing, ask a printer to donate the printing), and citrus fruit which your project can buy at wholesale prices and then sell at a mark-up during winter months.

Peddling Books
This is a natural for RIF projects. You might sponsor a book fair, with proceeds donated to your project (a number of qualified RIF book suppliers offer book fair services). Or sell used books. One project followed the theme, "Turn Old Books into New," and sold donated books at a shopping mall, with proceeds going to their book budget for the next year. You can also rent a booth at Christmas bazaars and sell donated books you've collected during drives throughout the year, or join a merchants' sidewalk sale. Other book-items can also be marketed during your sales: bookmarks, made by your RIF youngsters, bookplates, etc.

Recycling
In one RIF project the youngsters collected aluminum lunch trays used in the school cafeteria, and sold them for 17 cents per pound. They then held a paper drive, and sold much of the collection to a chinchilla farmer who spread it on the floors of his chinchilla cages. (Evidently, he was eager for paper, for he paid the students more than they were offered anywhere else.) Aluminum cans, newspapers and rags are other recycling possibilities.

Back-Door Sales
There are attic sales, yard sales, patio sales and thrift shops. In one variation on the ubiquitous bake sale, a RIF project persuaded a McDonald's franchise to hold the bake sale for them.

RIF Things
Projects have made and sold everything from RIF pennants to RIF buttons, t-shirts, bumper-stickers and notebooks.

Auctions
You might hire a professional auctioneer and sell items donated by a local celebrity, or a car, or a group of used cars, or excess books from the library, or animals (doesn't every boy need a goat?).

Sell Your Skills and Muscles
RIF volunteers and older students often sell services, such as car washing, house cleaning, appliance repair, errand running, tutoring, party catering, baby-sitting, or yard work.

Publishing
RIF projects write, produce and sell cookbooks, local histories, maps, even collections of children's artwork and writing to doting parents. In any such publication, you can also sell advertising space. In fact, fundraising experts suggest that as much as 75 percent of the space may be devoted to advertising.

Community Birthday Calendars
One project created a RIF calendar in which, for a fee, people could have the dates of their birthdays and anniversaries noted. Then local merchants agreed to offer special gifts and discounts to the people during their birthday and anniversary weeks. A similar idea: for a donation, one project embroidered people's signatures on a town "signature quilt."

Raffles Galore
Another source of nearly endless possibilities. With the cooperation of gamestore owners, you might raffle off tickets redeemable for free playing time on electronic games. Or a weekend for two at a nearby resort or the town's most luxurious hotel. Or dinner at a good restaurant. Or 50 gallons of gas. Or an evening with the mayor, a pro athlete, or a musician. Or a sweater or shirt selected from a local store. The trick, in any case, is to get the possessor of the service or product to donate it, or to sell it to your project at a reduced rate.

Going to the Source: 3 Direct Appeal

Sitting down with a local businessman to request a contribution doesn't generate as much publicity as a RIF ball, but it surely is a great deal faster. Any RIF project that plans to operate for more than a year should definitely do direct appeal fundraising. Again, do check with an attorney on any community or state charitable solicitation laws that might affect your fundraising.

For more suggestions on organizing a direct appeal campaign, see your Approval Kit. Following are ideas on whom to solicit and how.

To Whom Does One Go for Money?

One goes to whomever has money, from banks to school boards to your Uncle Walter. There are generally seven categories of givers. Before you approach anyone, do try to discover whether they make contributions, and in what amounts, and whether they have concerns that RIF addresses. Below, some ideas.

Businesses and Professionals: banks, local industrial plants, department stores, car dealers, law firms, restaurants, printers, toy stores, bookstores, medical practices, etc.

How to Find Them
The phone book, the Chamber of Commerce, a long-time resident, the American Bar Association, the business writer on the newspaper.

How to Research Them
Request an annual report, read the business section of the newspaper (see who's making money, opening a new branch), check advertisements (see who sells to children and parents).

Service Organizations: Local chapters of national organizations such as Jaycees, Links, American Association of University Women, Business and Professional Women, sororities and fraternities, Kiwanis, Lions, etc. Also local service clubs and PTA's.

How to Find Them
The Chamber of Commerce, the city government office, the phone book, the public library.

How to Research Them
Call the group's president and request information. Are they already fully committed or would they be interested in a new project?

Public/Governmental Organizations: your school district, the city council, public library, universities and community colleges, local agencies that serve children and families.

How to Find Them
How to find them is obvious. To find the right person to speak to, call the public affairs department or information desk.

How to Research Them
Ask what guidelines are used to determine whether to support a public service.

Religious Groups: Not just local churches and synagogues, but branches of national groups such as Church Women United and Hadassah.

How to Find Them
The telephone book, the Chamber of Commerce.

How to Research Them
Does someone in your project know a member? Ask for information on what projects they've supported in the past, and whether they're able to take on new commitments now.

Foundations and Trusts: there are corporate and philanthropic, national and local varieties. Also, trust officers in banks who administer giving from family trusts and other trust funds.

How to Find Them
The Foundation Directory and *Where America's Large Foundations Make Their Grants* are the standard reference works. Check with the public library on how to use the resources of the Foundation Center, a national source of information on foundations. Call your local banks for the names of trust officers.

How to Research Them
Using the directories, check for foundations that contribute to groups in your state or locality. Many foundations require that you submit requests on special forms or in a particular format. Observe submission deadlines.

Individuals: Wealthy people in the community to be contacted in person as well as members of the general public with a likely stake in RIF activities, to be contacted with direct-mail solicitation letters or in person.

How to Find Them
The society pages of the newspaper, the membership list of the local Board of Trade (which you'll probably have to pay for), lists of boards of directors of local institutions and philanthropic and arts organizations. For the interested public: address listings of families in neighborhoods where RIF operates; commercially published mailing lists.

How to Research Them
Find out before contacting individuals what their interests are and what causes they already support. Much can be gleaned by careful reading of the newspaper, and by befriending social reporters. When using commercial mailing lists, try to determine whether they've recently been used for a similar appeal.

United Giving Campaigns: United Way, United Black Fund, etc.

How to Find Them
The telephone book.

How to Research Them
Call and ask how your RIF project can qualify for funding. Decisions on giving are made locally by community chapters.

Direct Appeal Tips

A number of tips hold true regardless of what form of direct appeal you're using—personal visit, solicitation letter, formal proposal or direct-mail.

- Ask for a specific amount, not for "whatever you feel you can afford." If soliciting

a business, try to determine how much they usually contribute, and ask for an amount within that range. If approaching individuals, allow more flexibility, but suggest specific amounts to set your "cellar-price": for example, request $10, $15, $20 or Other $____.

- A fundraiser we know is forever counseling nonprofits to "Get off your knees." You needn't feel embarrassed to ask for money. Think of it as offering people an opportunity to invest in a program that performs valuable services for their children and their community.
- Target organizations and groups of people with allied interests. For instance, you're more likely to win a contribution from a labor union whose members have school-age children than a civic group that specializes in serving the elderly.
- Don't ask for "operating funds" or for contributions to your "general revenue" budget. Givers prefer to know what their money will help you achieve. So for instance, you might request a contribution to "help us bring 300 books to 100 children."
- Persistently encourage your board members and your volunteers to bring RIF to the attention of their personal friends and business associates. Especially if your board is influential, those contacts can be your most valuable fundraising tool.
- Tell potential contributors about your other supporters. If the amount of the gifts are not confidential (and always ask each donor if it's permissible to publicly recognize the amount), tell your prospects how much others have donated. Contributions from influential businesses and groups help to legitimize your project; if the president of the bank contributes, people tend to conclude that yours must be a worthwhile project.
- Be positive and upbeat. For sure, tell people that RIF is working toward a goal of enormous social and economic importance, but don't ring the doomsday bells. Emphasize the tremendous results your RIF project is scoring against a terrible problem.
- Cultivate your contributors. Send them clippings of your publicity and copies of children's letters. Mail them your newsletters and reports. If your project is featured in *RIF Newsletter* or the RIF *Bulletin*, send them a copy. (Drop us a line and we'll be happy to send you some extras.) If you come across an article about falling reading scores or the difficulty of finding jobs for functionally illiterate youths, send it to your contributors with a note. Invite them to distributions and special activities and consider holding a "thank-you" distribution and luncheon.

We recently saw first-hand how important it is to keep in touch with contributors. A national RIF fundraiser was visiting with the person responsible for the contributions program of a major corporation. They were discussing how difficult fundraising becomes in a slack

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economy, and the executive said her company was reducing their contributions to many groups. "And you know," she said, "the first ones we cut are going to be the ones who write and ask for money once a year, and then are never heard from again." The announcement on page 9, which ran in a local newspaper, is how one RIF project in Jefferson City, Missouri, made sure contributors felt appreciated.

- Think imaginatively about "in-kind" contributions businesses might give your project. Ask a printer to donate production services for your newsletter, a novelty company to contribute free balloons, a stationery store to donate magic markers and poster boards, an attorney to file for the project's tax-exempt status.
- Be persistent without being pushy. If someone says "no" one year, don't be afraid to come back the next.

Tactic #1: The Personal Visit

Generally, if you're asking a business for a large amount or approaching an individual, you'll use some combination of letters, telephone calls and personal visits. The person-to-person visit, arranged preferably by someone who knows the prospective contributor, is perhaps the most effective way to obtain a large donation with minimal effort. It's more difficult for someone to refuse your request once you've established some personal rapport.

Tips: Making Your Visits Personable and Profitable

- Do your homework. Memorize every available fact on the children you serve, the books you provide, your activities, your volunteers, and especially your budget. Brainstorm with the fundraising committee. Anticipate every possible question you might be asked and prepare an answer. If you're new to this, try role-playing the visit with an experienced fundraiser.
- Be prepared to deliver your information in no more than 30 minutes. If your host or hostess wants you to stay longer, fine, but be ready to deliver your message succinctly.
- Consider having two RIF project people on each visit. Sometimes you can play off one another so one person needn't drone on for 10 minutes straight. Be clear beforehand on who says what.
- Consider showing the RIF film in your meeting. It's a good icebreaker and saves a lot of explanation.
- Have written materials to leave behind. Too, an excellent tactic is to give people something they'll want to keep out of the file drawer—a RIF bookmark, for instance.
- Send a thank-you note promptly following your visit, whether the person contributes or not.

Tactic #2: The Solicitation Letter

The writing of solicitation letters has risen these days to the level of a developed craft, if not an art. You'll probably send solicitation letters to businesses and corporations, to service organizations, sometimes to foundations, and to individuals. For our purposes, we'll consider letters to individuals as direct-mail fundraising, a class in itself. For some good ideas, see *America's Most Successful Fund Raising Letters,* available for a fee from Public Service Materials Center, 111 North Central Avenue, Hartsdale, NY 10530.

Tips: Giving Your Solicitation Letters Some Punch

- Brevity is beautiful. Keep your letters under two pages. Generally put no more than three sentences in each paragraph. Write in simple and direct language and use not a single word of education jargon.
- Be factual and be concrete. One real-life fact or example beats a dozen generalizations. For example (to take our own advice), instead of saying, "America has woeful reading problems," say, "Did you know that 500 high school seniors in our town couldn't graduate with their classmates this spring because they failed the state's competency test?" Or, "In an informal survey of local businesses, 35 percent said they have trouble finding young people who read and write well enough to take skilled, high-paying jobs." One very persuasive strategy is to refer to a recent article that illustrates your point, and enclose a copy.
- Tell the reader in the first paragraph who you are and why you're writing. For instance: "We write to ask you to contribute to our town's Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) project, a project that is turning our young people into literate citizens by offering them books and encouraging them to read."
- Close the letter by repeating your request, as in: "Once again, we hope you will be able to contribute to the RIF project. May we suggest that a donation of $25 would be appropriate."
- If your project has obtained legal tax-exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service, inform the reader that contributions will be tax-deductible.
- List the names of your board members on your letterhead.
- Ask an influential board member to sign the letter. Or have different board members sign according to who knows which recipients.
- Put background information in your enclosed literature. Only the essential and most persuasive facts belong in your letter.

Sample: How One RIF Project Does It
This is an annual re-solicitation letter that RIF of Southern California sent to contributors:

Dear RIF Member,

This is an annual reminder.

During the past year your local chapter of RIF has expanded and enriched its activities in many ways. For one, we are keeping in touch with you, our contributors, with a semi-annual newsletter. We hope you're reading it.

For two, we have almost doubled the number of paperback books given to children—from 15,446 to 29,301. We now reach 7,353 children in 31 schools. Our volunteers have increased from 32 to 70 and our working members distribute books in 3 inner city libraries and 2 day-care centers as well as the schools.

We continued to have the invaluable support of the California Museum of Science and Industry, where the office and book storage is headquartered—free of charge! We have no paid employees but 166 paid-up members some of whom name RIF in their United Way pledge. And one Savings & Loan Co. and one department store have funded book distributions to their neighborhood school.

In the fiscal year 1980-81 our goal is to reach 50 schools and to raise another $10,000...

Won't you renew your membership? And perhaps recommend RIF-So. Calif. to friends. For a reading citizenry makes an enlightened nation.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Keith McKenzie
Chairman of the Board

Tactic #3: The Proposal

A proposal is longer and more formal than a simple solicitation letter, and it generally describes some specific activity you want the recipient to support. Foundations often require a full-blown proposal, and you will usually write proposals when asking businesses and organizations to get involved in or to support a specific activity, such as expanding services to a new group of children.

Tips: Making Your Proposals Persuasive

- Foundations often ask that proposals be prepared in a special format, so ask for guidelines before you start.
- To save time, write a "boilerplate" description of your RIF project that you can insert in different proposals.
- Break your proposal into clear sections. Use lots of headlines to break up the text. When possible, present information in bulleted lists (as these tips are presented) rather than straight narrative.
- Begin your proposal with a summary. Use a headline and one paragraph for each element, including: the proposal, the purpose, the cost, the anticipated time commitment required, and the projected schedule.
- Make it look professional. Your proposal should be typed, doublespaced, with a large-type element. Enclose it in an attractive folder. Nothing should be hand-lettered. If the proposal is more than 15 or 20 pages, consider sectioning it with plastic-tabbed dividers. Use visuals: for instance, illustrate the schedule on a time-line.

Tactic #4:
Direct-Mail Solicitation

You know the stacks of letters you receive asking for money to end war, save the platypus, and develop human outposts on Mars? That's direct-mail solicitation, and it's a highly specialized and competitive form of fundraising.

If you're appealing to a small, well-defined group of people (parents in several neighborhoods, for instance), you can probably tackle this on your own. For a larger effort, however, you'd be wise to consult a professional fundraiser.

Direct-mail can also be highly rewarding. According to recent research, some 90 percent of all philanthropic giving in America comes not from corporations, not from foundations, but from individuals, many of them contacted through direct-mail appeals.

Tips: Sending Direct-Mail In the Right Direction

- Again, check with an attorney on whether charitable solicitation laws will affect you.
- Direct-mail tends to work best for well-known projects. So if your project gets wide media coverage and has strong name recognition in the community, direct-mail might be a fruitful strategy.
- If you buy a mailing list, do so with care. Ask when it was last updated and how often it's been used by nonprofits in your area in the last year.
- See if you can piggy-back, sending your solicitation with a bank's monthly statements, for instance, or a PTA's parent newsletter.
- Calculate costs with great caution. Visit your post office to find the least expensive mailing options. After the mailing, calculate the amount of contributions and compare to your costs.
- Enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope in which people may send their contributions.

Sample: Pensacola Picks Up on the News
This letter was sent out by the RIF project in Pensacola, Florida, along with an article headlined, "Program Promotes Basic Reading Skills."

Dear Civic Leader:

If you saw the (enclosed) article in the July 14 edition of The Pensacola News, you will understand why I am writing to you.

If you, too, believe that "Reading Is Fundamental" to a full life; if you, too, believe that all children should be able to own their own books; if you, too, believe in Pensacola's youth, and are interested in seeing that our educationally and economically deprived children are given an opportunity to discover the importance and fun of reading, then perhaps you will assist our organization.

RIF in Pensacola needs your help. If you or your organization is interested in helping us attain our goals, and would like to volunteer your services and/or make a donation . . . please contact:

Mrs. Pat Gadson
Reading Department
Liberty Instructional Centers
XX North X Avenue

If you would like to learn more about RIF, we will be happy to give your organization a presentation that will clarify our goals and vividly demonstrate the effectiveness of the program.

Thank you for any assistance you can render.

Sincerely,

Dr. Estelle Lorenz
Chair, RIF in Pensacola

6 RIF Projects 4 Raise Funds

To illustrate just how various and imaginative fundraising can be, we offer these profiles of the fundraising campaigns of six RIF projects.

They're a diverse bunch, ranging from New York City to Motley, Minnesota, but they have one important feature in common: they all have coordinators who know their communities and are willing to hustle to find the money to keep their RIF projects going.

New York

Grants can provide a fertile source for funding. Beth Pettit's projects at PS 92 and West Harlem in New York City recently won a $30,000 grant from the New York State Division for Youth.

Mrs. Pettit says: "We applied for the grant through our assemblywoman, Geraldine Daniels. She came to our RIF graduation last year and said that if she got elected, she would see that we got some decent funding—and she did! We had 24 hours to write a 20-page proposal, and it came through!"

"We started out lucky," says Mrs. Pettit. "My college (Manhattanville) sponsored us for the first three years." The college also helped secure donations from IBM and Pepsico.

As is the way of the world, one contact led to another. Elizabeth McCormack, who was president of Manhattanville College during the year the college sponsored RIF, later went to work for the Rockefeller family foundation—and last year, the Rockefeller fund donated to the project.

Not all of Mrs. Pettit's fundraising has depended on personal contacts, however. "One year we went through the yellow pages and wrote to all the lawyers, doctors, and dentists in our section of New York. We asked each of them to sponsor one class, and we didn't do badly—we ended up with about 25 classes sponsored."

Mrs. Pettit also had these tips for RIF fundraisers:

- "Know your community—find out all you can about neighborhood agencies, such as the New York Community Boards."
- "Do all the research you can. I spend days in the Foundation library, checking such things as who has funded programs in my neighborhood. I also read all the local newspapers and lots of magazines. I ask the people I read about to come as guests to read to the kids—to show them how good our program is—and *then* ask them for money."
- "Write a letter telling a little bit about RIF to get the prospective donor interested, wait until you're sure they've had the letter for a day or two, then call and make an appointment."

- "Keep up with all contacts—keep writing to them and sending them reports to let them know what you're doing."
- "Apply over and over again, even if you are turned down at first."

For the shy, her final comment may be reassuring: "It's not how erudite you are—it's how enthusiastic and committed you are to your RIF project that convinces people to give you money."

Contributors, PS 92 and West Harlem RIF
Citizens Committee for New York
New York Youth Board
New York Foundation
New York Community Trust
Chemical Bank
New York Continentals
Rockefeller Foundation
New York State Division for Youth

Dallas

A RIF project can grow only as fast as the money comes in. The project in Dallas, Texas, operated by the Dallas Independent School District (DISD) and headed by Ann Freeman, provides a remarkable example of excellent fund development over a period of eight years. Dallas RIF began in 1973 as a summer project in the David Crockett Elementary School, funded by Right-to-Read. "We got our first donation through our (school district's) volunteer program," says Ann Freeman.

Margaret Dunlap, then assistant volunteer coordinator for DISD, found the summer RIF program so valuable that she approached her husband, James, who was president of a local service group, the East Dallas Exchange Club. That organization was looking for a new project to support, and agreed to fund RIF at one school.

That same year, the Dallas chapter of the National Council of Jewish Women, the First Presbyterian Church, and the Sanger-Harris department store joined with the East Dallas Exchange Club and provided funding for a total of six schools. Sanger Harris was the first business to contribute to RIF-DISD funding.

Today, RIF-DISD operates in 98 schools with a local budget of $158,700, funded by more than 80 contributors from business, civic, religious, and educational organizations, as well as individual donors.

Don't overlook private donors. In 1979 Margaret and James Dunlap were killed in a plane crash. After their deaths, DISD established the Margaret and James Dunlap Fund for Reading Is Fundamental. Individuals make private donations through this fund which honors the memory of two people so instrumental in establishing RIF in the Dallas schools.

Contributors to Dallas RIF

1973

East Dallas Exchange Club
First Presbyterian Church
Greater Dallas Section National Council of Jewish Women
Sanger-Harris

1980-81

Civic Organizations
Altrusa Club of Oak Cliff
Dallas Big Sisters, Inc.
Dallas Chapter LINKS
Dallas-Pleasant Grove Chapter AARP
Delta Kappa Gamma—Eta Eta Chapter
East Dallas Exchange Club
Greater Dallas Section National Council of Jewish Women
Kiwanis Club of White Rock
Oak Cliff Civitan
Oak Cliff Kiwanis Club
Oak Cliff Lions Club
Uptown Exchange Club

Educational Organizations
PTA Gabe Allen Elementary School
PTA James Bowie Elementary School
PTA Casa View Elementary School
PTA Nancy J. Cochran Elementary School
PTA Jefferson Davis Elementary School
PTA James Fannin Elementary School
PTA Charles Gill Elementary School
PTA Nathaniel Hawthorne Elementary School
PTA Margaret B. Henderson Elementary School
PTA A. S. Johnston Elementary School
PTA Richard Lagow Elementary School
PTA T. L. Marsalis Elementary School
PTA T. D. Marshall Elementary School
PTA R. Q. Mills Elementary School
PTA Rosemont Elementary School
PTA Alex Sanger Elementary School
PTA Ewell D. Walker Middle School

Business Organizations
Atlantic Richfield Company
Austin Industries
Henry C. Beck Company
Celanese Chemical Company
Clements-Prinzhorn Company
Dallas Market Center Company
Dallas National Bank
Electronic Data Systems Corporation
Employers Insurance Company
Fagadau Energy Corporation
First City Bank of Dallas
Frito-Lay, Inc.
Fox and Jacobs
Great American Reserve Insurance Company
Groco Paint Manufacturing Company
Grove State Bank
IBM
The LTV Company
Kenneth Leventhal and Company
Lomas and Nettleton Financial Corp.
Lone Star Company
Marty's Liquor Store, Inc.
Merrill Lynch Pierce Fenner and Smith
Metro Arts
Mostek Corporation
NCH Corporation
Neiman-Marcus
Pollock Paper Company
Republic National Bank
Rockwell International
Sanger-Harris
Shell Oil Company
The Color Place
The Sun Company
Texas Distributors, Inc.
Texas Industries
The Trammell Crow Company
Vought Corporation

Religious Organizations
Buckner Baptist Benevolences
Dallas Monthly Meeting of Friends
East Dallas Christian Church
First Community Church
First Presbyterian Church
Good Street Baptist Church
Highland Park Presbyterian Church
Highland Park United Methodist Church
Northhaven United Methodist Church
Northway Christian Church
Ridgeview Presbyterian Church
Rosemont Christian Church
Women of St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church
Temple Emanu-El

Southern California

The year 1974 marked the beginning of RIF of Southern California, Inc. In that first year the project gave 4,500 children from eight schools, the California State Museum of Science and Industry (which donates office space to the project), and the Juvenile Hall a total of 13,350 books. In just seven years the project has grown into one serving 57 schools and libraries. The number of funding sources is now 18 groups and nearly 200 individuals.

Sylvia Ziskind, Vice President and Director of Book Distributions, says that much of Southern California's fundraising occurs by "happenstance." "For example, we saw in *RIF Newsletter* that a certain foundation had given some money to a RIF project near ours, so we looked up the foundation, did a great deal of groundwork, visited them, and wrote a proposal. They turned us down. But in the same mail with their letter of rejection came a check for $10,000, no strings attached, from a member of the family that runs the foundation."

Of course, much of Southern California RIF's money comes through hard work. Mrs. Ziskind gives frequent speeches about RIF to organizations such as Soroptimists and Altrusa, and, she says, "usually we get a donation after a speech."

Public education and publications help, too. "Recently a woman called in because she had seen one of the (RIF) public service announcements. She asked us to send her some literature. We did, and she sent us a check for $1,000, with a note saying she would continue to contribute."

Adds Mrs. Ziskind "A friend asked me recently, 'What is it you actually *do* at RIF—I know it has something to do with children, but I don't know what it really is.' I sent her some of our literature, and she gave us a check for $100, and a promise to do it every year."

Southern California RIF does produce excellent promotional literature, including a newsletter which reports on project activities. The newsletter is printed by the project, and carries a banner saying "The money we save by printing this newsletter ourselves buys 250 books."

Individual contributors play an important part in funding the project. "We solicit individuals on a regular basis. If someone sends us a check in June, 1980, then in June, 1981 a letter of solicitation goes out to them, with an enclosed envelope."

These envelopes are printed with RIF-Southern California's address, and include a place for the donor to indicate name, address, and amount enclosed. There are four kinds of membership available—regular member at $10, sustaining member at $20, charter member at $50, and founder at $100.

"Almost every day when I open the mail there's something—$10, $50, $100," says Mrs. Ziskind.

Contributors to RIF of Southern California

Ahmanson Foundation
Altrusa
ARA Food Service
Brody Charitable Fund
Coast Federal Savings and Loan
Friends of the Library
Alpha Kappa Alpha
Angel City Links
Bing Foundation
Bullocks Wilshire
Ettinger Foundation
Los Angeles Lawyers' Wives
Security Pacific Charitable
Security Pacific Bank
Maximax Properties
Soroptimist Clubs
Washington PTA
Women's Clubs of Santa Fe Springs, Covina, and Pasadena
And 186 loyal individual members

Motley

RIF in Motley, Minnesota is only two years old, but has already broadened its funding base considerably. In its first year it was funded entirely by the Independent School District and three service organizations, who gave a total of $800. It's currently funded by 10 different sources, including various businesses. And the original supporters have continued to contribute, always a good sign of a program's standing with the community.

"I feel the organizations have been very generous," says Olivia DeGeest. "We are a very small town and they have small memberships."

"This year I contacted several small businesses in Motley, and received very positive support from them for the program," she adds.

Contributors to RIF in Motley
Lions Club
El Ray Cafe
Lionettes
School Boosters
Independent School District
Two Rivers
Motley Motel
Smitty Standard Station
Buerga Feed
Staples State Bank-Motley Division

Jefferson City

In Jefferson City, Missouri, the Opti-Misses club operates a RIF project for nearly 1,500 children in grades 2 and 3 in 14 schools. They raise about $1,000 a year, and coordinator Lu Ann Frevert personally handles most of the fundraising.

"I worked for a collection agency before I became a housewife." Mrs. Frevert jokes, "so I know how to ask people for money."

Since the Opti-Misses is the women's auxiliary of the Optimists International, the three Optimist clubs in Jefferson City were first on the fundraising list when RIF began. "They gave the majority of our funds that first year," said Mrs. Frevert.

For the rest, she sent 20 letters to local banks, savings and loans, and utility companies, each requesting $25. "I decided not to ask anybody for a lot, and got a 100 percent response." Letters to all service organizations that first year won a 10 percent response.

Mrs. Frevert also approached PTA groups at participating schools, asking each to contribute $100 or $175. She spoke to these people personally. When the project first expanded to include third-graders, the Opti-Misses provided funds for the second grades and asked each PTA to support the third grades.

To thank contributors, the RIF project ran a newspaper ad, then sent a copy to each contributor, with the name circled. (See the Opti-Misses announcement on page 9.)

Mrs. Frevert offers these tips to RIF fundraisers:

- "Go to a lot of firms and ask for a specific amount. Don't ask for $25 or $50, ask for one or the other."
- "If someone doesn't respond, call. I found that a lot of times the letter hadn't gotten to the right person."
- "Lots of service organizations have money they're waiting to give to a cause, so you should approach them all."

Contributors to RIF in Jefferson City
Evening Optimists of JC
Optimist Club of JC
Sunrise Optimists
United Telephone Company
Mu Epsilon, Beta Sigma Phi
Mutual Savings and Loan
Capital Savings and Loan
Home Savings and Loan
Jefferson Bank
Central Trust Bank

Tulsa

Nancy McDonald in Tulsa, Oklahoma builds her RIF fundraising on careful research.

To find businesses likely to support RIF, she reads the business section of the newspaper daily, keeping tabs on who's making money. She also tries to identify businesses that employ people whose children attend schools with RIF projects. "For example," she said, a local industrial plant "has many employees who live in a certain area. It was natural to go to their executive vice-president and point out that many of his employees' children attend this local school. He was very willing to fund that (RIF) project."

Mrs. McDonald also keeps an eye on the local service clubs. Recently, she said, "A member of the Downtown Rotary said, 'Nancy, you really need to ask Downtown Rotary to fund RIF again. We have a build-up in our contribution fund.' I followed right up and was offered a $1,000 check the next Monday."

How does she find individual contributors? "My husband is a physician, so I have access to the county medical society's list." (Such lists are generally available to the public, too.) From this she identifies people whose children attend public schools. "Also, I sit on the board of directors of several community organizations, and make contacts that way."

Mrs. McDonald writes a personal letter to each potential contributor—no form letters. She sends a personal letter to thank the donors, with a copy to the Superintendent of Schools, who also writes, and the Board of Education. Contributors are invited to attend the RIF "Boosters Project Coffee," and are also encouraged to join in distributions.

Contributors to RIF in Tulsa
Sun Oil
RADCOE
Bethlehem Steel
Williams Company
Target
JANCO Kitchens
Downtown Rotary
American Association of University Women
Civitan Club
Individuals

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Smithsonian Institution
Washington, D.C. 20560
(202) 287-3220

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